

STATEMENT OF THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An insulating structure comprising:

an elongate ~~insulating~~ shank extending in a longitudinal direction, said shank being formed of a first insulating material and having a first outer surface; and

at least one ~~insulating~~ shed extending transverse ~~traverse~~ to the longitudinal direction of the elongate shank, said at least one shed being formed of a second insulating material and having a second outer surface;

wherein at least a portion of said first outer surface of said shank is defined by a ~~first insulating surface, said first insulating surface having~~ a patterned texture including defined by an array of substructures selected from protuberances and concavities which are formed in said first insulating material of said shank, and

wherein at least a portion of said second outer surface of said at least one shed is defined by a ~~second insulating surface, said second insulating surface having~~ a patterned texture including defined by an array of substructures selected from protuberances and concavities which are formed in said second insulating material of said at least one shed.

2. (currently amended) An insulating structure as claimed in ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein:

said shank has a circumference, and said array of substructures formed in said first insulating material of said shank ~~of said first insulating surface~~ is spaced around the circumference of said shank and longitudinally along said shank.

3-11 (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said substructures formed in both said first insulating material of said shank and said second insulating material of said at least one shed ~~of said first insulating surface and said second insulating surface~~ have at least one of a spherical, ellipsoidal, paraboloidal, hyperboloidal, conical and symmetric shape.

13. (currently amended) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said array of substructures that define said first outer surface of said shank ~~of said first insulating surface~~ is arranged such that the surface area of said first outer ~~insulating~~ surface is substantially constant per unit length along the longitudinal direction of said shank.

14. (currently amended) An insulating structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said array of substructures that define said first outer surface of said shank ~~of said first insulating surface~~ is arranged such that the surface area of said first outer ~~insulating~~ surface ~~of said insulating structure~~ has a defined variation per unit length along the longitudinal direction of said shank.